

# THE SECOND CHANCE ACT

In April 2008, Congress passed the Second Chance Act, first-of-its-kind legislation enacted with bipartisan support and backed by a broad spectrum of leaders in law enforcement, corrections, courts, behavioral health, and other areas. The Second Chance Act represents a federal investment in strategies to reduce recidivism and increase public safety, as well as to reduce corrections costs for state and local governments. The bill authorized up to \$165 million in federal grants to state, local, and tribal government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Since 2009, more than 600 Second Chance Act grant awards have been made to government agencies and nonprofit organizations from 49 states for reentry programs serving adults and juveniles. As of June 2014, more than 92,000 individuals have participated in these programs, and of the program participants who received employment services, more than 12,000 have obtained employment since 2011. Grantees provide vital services—including employment training and assistance, substance use treatment, education, housing, family programming, mentoring, victims support, and other services—to make a person's transition from prison or jail safer and more successful. The grants also support improved corrections and supervision practices that aim to reduce recidivism. The Second Chance Act's grant programs are funded and administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.

## **The Second Chance Reauthorization Act of 2015 improves state and local grant programs to promote successful prisoner reentry and improve public safety.**

- This legislation continues targeted funding through 2018 for reentry programs at the state and local level that have been proven to reduce recidivism, lead to better outcomes for those released from prison, and save prison costs.
- The bill provides separate planning and implementation grants to ensure that projects are well developed at each stage and informed by research and best practices.
- The Second Chance reauthorization expands its impact by adding nonprofit organizations to allowable grantees for grants for programs promoting family-based substance abuse treatment and career training.
- The bill repeals several provisions calling for studies that have been completed and removes support for programs for which other funding sources have been identified. It also consolidates the reentry court program into the Adult and Juvenile Offender State and Local Demonstration projects.

## **The Second Chance Reauthorization Act reduces Bureau of Prison costs and saves taxpayer dollars by improving federal reentry policy.**

- While the United States is home to only 5% of the world's population, it is responsible for 25% of the world's prison population. This has led to prison overcrowding and out-of-control spending on corrections in the United States, without a correlation in public safety. Currently, the Department of Justice spends over 25% of its budget on the Bureau of Prisons – this is money that would otherwise be spent on other programs like federal investigators and prosecutors, and support for state and local governments.
- The Second Chance Reauthorization Act attempts to address the expanding prison population by continuing the Elderly and Family Reunification for Certain Non-Violent Offenders Pilot Program and modestly expands the pool of eligible inmates.

## **The Second Chance Reauthorization Act promotes accountability.**

- The bill requires periodic audits of grantees to ensure that federal dollars are responsibly spent. Grantees with unresolved audits will not be eligible for funding.